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ABSTRACT

This module on quilting is one of eight modules designed to provide instruction on authentic Blue Ridge Mountain crafts to adult basic education students at a low cost. Contents include notes on the history of quilting (including vocabulary words); process used, including equipment and materials, as well as method described narratively and graphically; and the followup, where the student is told how to progress to higher levels of proficiency. The Fry readability level of this module is 3.5. A teacher's guide which lists resources for each module in the series is available separately (see Note). (MEK)

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SHARING THE ARTS OF THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

QUILTING

Conducted By:

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Martha Holman
Project Director
Special 309 Project

CE 024 365

PREFACE

"Sharing the Arts of the Blue Ridge Mountains" is written so you, the AGE student, can learn about mountain arts. There are eight modules. Each module tells about the history of one art. Each module tells how to make a useful item the way mountain craftsmen do.

Crafts used to be a way of life for mountain families. People in the mountains were secluded. Families had to make everything they used. Later, city people wanted to buy these items. A crafts market developed. The mountain people found they could enjoy making things and have an income.

Today many people like to make items. It is a pleasure to make things. People still like to buy handmade items. Thus, there is still a market for items that are interesting to make.

In writing these modules, about 30 artists and craftsmen were interviewed. The craftsmen and artists shared the way they created their crafts. Project staff also visited Hambidge Center at Rabun Gap, Georgia; Berea in Kentucky; and Pi Beta Phi Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg, Tennessee. These schools are three of the ones which teach mountain arts and crafts. They were established to teach the mountain people some of the dying crafts in the early 1900's.

Today these schools, as well as John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, North Carolina, and Penland Institute, Penland, North Carolina, have classes. Many vocational-technical schools also teach crafts. Junior colleges sometimes offer non-credit craft courses. The Cooperative Extension Service holds some craft classes. Later you may want to go to a class at one of these schools.

Bob Nichols of Helen, Georgia, did the art work for this project.

Mrs. Esther Witt was the special consultant for this module. This project could not have been written without her help. Mrs. Witt worked with the project staff in selecting a pretty but simple pattern and in writing the instructions for quilting.

If you want to learn more about the Blue Ridge Mountain area or quilting, your ACE teacher has a list of books and resources.

MRS. ESTHER WITT, Consultant

Mrs. Esther Witt shows her quilt with the Star pattern used in this project.

Mrs. Esther Witt of Helen, Georgia,comes from a family that is interested in crafts and handiwork. Her mother has always been involved in needlework crafts and passed this skill on to her daughters. Although she crochets, knits, embroiders and makes lace, quilting is what Mrs. Witt is best known for. She has won many awards at the Hiawassee Fairs for her quilts. People all over the country have bought her quilts. Some of her quilts have sold for as much as $350.00.

Mrs. Witt is active in community projects. Recently, Mrs. Witt and other ladies of the community had a quilting bee. This is an old tradition. They made a quilt for the new minister's home.

John Kollock, a well-known artist from the mountain area, has painted a picture of Mrs. Witt and her quilts. This picture entitled "Piece Work," is included in his book <u>These Gentle Hills</u>.

QUILTING

I. ABOUT QUILTING

Almost everyone has heard of quilting. Most people have seen a quilt. Quilting is an old craft. Egyptian kings wore quilted robes. King Henry VIII gave Catherine Howard 23 quilts for their wedding. Quilts have been used as covers for centuries. Now quilts are popular again. Some are used for wallhangings. Other quilted items are made to wear, such as skirts or aprons. Bedspreads are popular too. Many quilted pieces are true works of art.

The basic way to make a quilt has remained the same through the years. To quilt you sew a top, middle and bottom layer of material together.

When people moved to the Blue Ridge Mountains, women made quilts from scraps; nothing was wasted. Material was expensive and scarce. Cotton or leaves were used as batting. (Batting is the filling that goes in a quilt.) Today polyester batting is used. Most quilts used to be sewn by hand. Today some people sew them on machines.

Quilting was an important part of life in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Quilts were the main source of cover. They added color to the small cabins. People expected young girls to learn to quilt. Most girls made several quilts before they were married. Quilting was a social activity. The women had quilting parties or quilting bees. The ladies would visit while they worked on a quilt.

Quilts were a treasured possession. Quilts were given as wedding presents. Sometimes the bride would get quilt squares as presents. The bride would sew the squares together, then all the ladies in the area would help quilt it.

Friendship quilts were prized. For this quilt, each lady made a special square and put her name or initials on a quilt square.

There were everyday quilts and "Sunday" quilts. The everyday quilts were mostly pieced quilts made from small strips of cloth. Sunday quilts were often appliqued. (Applique is to sew a piece of material on top of another piece of material.)

Both pieced and appliqued quilts are known as "patchwork" quilts. Each is from small pieces of material. The difference is in the way they are sewn to make the quilt. Fabric scraps are sewn together to make the quilt top in a pieced quilt. To make an appliqued quilt, one must piece the scraps to make the design. This design is then sewn onto the quilt top. "Crazy" quilts are made from patches sewn on with no special pattern.

"Needlework" quilts are decorated with fancy stitches rather than material. A tied or tacked quilt is really just that. One does not sew the quilt. Instead, small knots are made at intervals to hold the three layers together. This does not make a fancy quilt. However, it is a good way to make a quick quilt.

There are many old quilt patterns. Some quilters design their own patterns. Most designs reflect a special interest of the quilter such as the rose garden, the tulip, and the wedding ring patterns.

Quilts should be pretty as well as useful. Color balance and harmony are important in your pattern. Select colors which compliment each other. Select a color and style for your quilt border that frames your quilt. Try to sew straight lines. Do not bunch the lining.

The quilting itself can be as important as the pattern. The stitch can accent the pattern. It can make a simple pattern fancy. There are five basic types of quilting.

1. "Quilting by the piece" - The tiny stitches go around the pattern. (Figure 1)

2. "Quilting by the square" - The stitches go around the square. The pattern is ignored. (Figure 2)

3. "Fan Quilting" - Quarter circles are sewn in each square. (Figure 3)

4. "Elbow quilting" - The squared lines move to the corner, not to the center of the square. (Figure 4)

5. "All over design" - The quilt has one large design. The stitch follows this design. This is the most difficult type of quilting. (Figure 5)[1]

Quilting is an inexpensive craft. Fabric scraps are used for the design.

Quilting requires basic sewing skills.

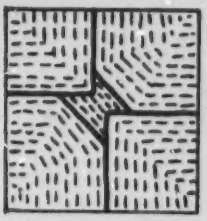


Figure 1

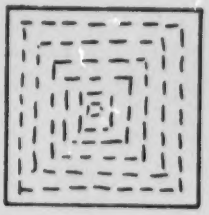
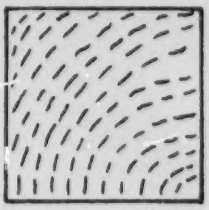


Figure 2



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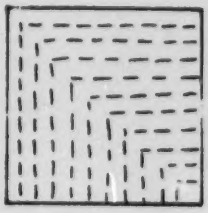


Figure 4

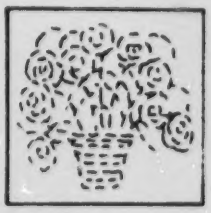


Figure 5

WORDS TO KNOW

These terms are basic to quilting. Be familiar with them.

1. Appliqué - to sew a piece of material on top of another piece of material. (Figure 6) This is usually sewn on with a whip stitch.

2. Backing - the material which is the bottom side of the quilt. This is almost always an inexpensive material such as muslin. You can use a sheet.

3. Baste - to sew with a long running stitch, usually with a different colored thread, so it is easy to remove.

[1] The Foxfire Book, ed. Eliot Wigginton. (Garden City, New York, Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1977) Pg. 149.

4. Batting - the filling or stuffing which is the middle layer of a quilt. Usually this is cotton, or a dacron or polyester blend. (The polyester does not lump after use like cotton often does.) Sometimes an old blanket is used for this. The batting does not show but provides warmth for the quilt.

Figure 6

5. Bias - a piece of material or binding cut across the grain of the fabric. (Bias tape is used to finish the edges in this module.)

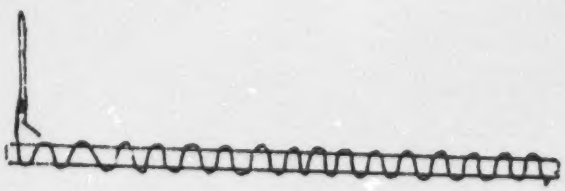


Figure 7

6. Binding - a piece of material, usually in long strips, put around the edge of the quilt.

7. Block (or square) - one section of a quilt that is usually square. Several of these put together make the quilt.

8. Interlining - a piece of material that is sewn between two other pieces.

9. Piecing a top or quilt - sewing the scraps (or pattern pieces) together to make the design.

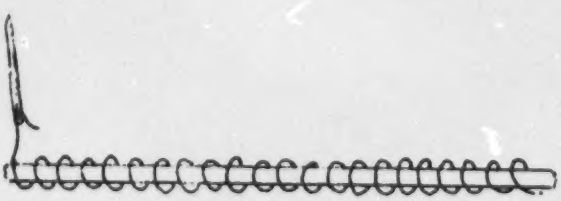


Figure 8

10. Quilt top - the top side of the quilt with the design or pattern on it.

11. Quilting a quilt - sewing the three layers together.

12. Running stitch - in and out stitch used in quilting all three layers. Similar to basting but small stitches. (figure 7)

13. Whip stitch - sewing by making a border on the edge of the material. Always sew each stitch from bottom to top. (Figure 8)

II. HOW TO QUILT

There are twelve (12) steps in making a quilt. These should be read and understood before you begin a project.

1. Select your quilt top pattern. Patterns can be bought or made up. Cardboard makes good pattern pieces. Shirt cardboard is good to use. It is a good idea to cut some extra pattern pieces. Always cut the pattern pieces carefully. Be sure they are the same size as the original pattern piece. You may want to mark on the pattern pieces the number and color of each piece of fabric you will need.

2. Figure the amount of material you will need. Measure the bed you will use the quilt on. For the length, measure from the foot to the top of the bed. Then add at least 17 inches for the pillow and the tuck. For the width, measure from side to side. Be sure to add extra for the overhang. Then figure how many squares there will be. Next, figure how much material will be needed for the squares. The best way to estimate the fabric

is to measure the pattern pieces. Keep notes as to the number and colors of each piece in one block. Multiply this by the number of blocks. For example, a seven point star has two pattern pieces, the points and a center. (See Figures 9 and 10) These are put on one solid square. Decide how many points will be red, how many blue, etc. Decide what color the center will be. If you have 3 red points and 4 blue ones, plus a yellow center, make a note of this. If the quilt has 12 blocks, there will be 3 x 12 or 36 red points. There will be 4 x 12 or 48 blue points. There will be 12 yellow centers. There will be 12 squares. Measure the pattern pieces and then figure how much material is needed in each color. For the border, figure the length of the quilt twice. Then figure the width of the quilt twice. Add them together and add an extra 6 inches. Decide how wide the border is to be. Add this information to the first totals for the total amount of cloth to be used for the top. Begin by over-estimating. Any left over fabric can be used on another quilt. The batting and backing should be a little larger than the quilt top. Most quilting books have detailed information on figuring fabric amounts. Ask the ABE teacher if there are questions.

3. Cut the material. Always iron your fabric. Be sure to cut on the straight of the fabric. Be sure to cut the fabric 1/4 inch bigger than the pattern to allow for seams unless the pattern allows a seam line. Please note this module does allow the 1/4 inch seam line on the pattern.

4. Cut the background square or block.

5. Piece the block. Sew the design together. Put it on the block.

6. Set the quilt. Sew all the blocks together.

7. Put the border on the quilt top.

8. Mark the quilting design. Draw lines where you want to quilt with a chalk that will come off easily.

9. Prepare the quilt for quilting. Put on the batting and backing. Use batting the width of the quilt so it will not have to be pieced.

10. Put the quilt on a frame. A large hoop will do. The quilt can be basted securely if no frame is available.

12. Quilt the quilt.

13. Do the finish work. Whip the edges together.

This module is for making a quilted place mat. It will be the size of one quilt block. It provides a chance to work with colors.

It also teaches the techniques of quilting. The star pattern has been chosen.

Instructions for this project are for quilting by hand. However, quilting can be done by machine. (The machine should sew forward and reverse.)

The materials needed for the place mat are:

1. Fabric - one 13 inch square for the top. One bottom piece 18 inches by 13 inches. Two strips, 13 inches by 3½ inches for the sides. Use fabric that is light weight and washable. A white sheet or light weight muslin is good. Calico, cotton, gingham, broadcloth, chintz, and percale are good fabrics, also. Other fabrics can be used but may be hard to work with.

2. Batting - an 18 inch by 13 inch block of cotton or dacron batting.

3. Scraps of fabric - use several colors or patterns. Select colors and patterns that blend. To learn about colors ask the ABE teacher about the color wheel.

4. Bias tape - 37 inches to bind the edges.

A quilting kit should be made with these items:

1. Several needles the same size. Either size 7, 8 or 9 is good for quilting. You may want a longer needle to piece the top.

2. Adhesive tape (to protect your fingers).

3. Thimble.

4. Scissors - very sharp.

5. Pins - #17 dressmaker pins are good.

6. Yardstick - and/or ruler.

7. Large manila envelopes - for keeping pattern pieces.

8. Thread - for this project two spools should be plenty. It is better to use mercerized cotton or cotton covered dacron thread. Avoid cheap or old thread. If the thread breaks easily get a new spool.

9. Tracing paper, graph paper, drawing paper, light weight cardboard, soft pencils. These are used to make patterns, vary pattern sizes, and to create patterns.

Figure 9 on the next page is the design that is being used. On the following page are the pattern pieces to make the star. (Figure 10) Note that the dotted lines are the fold lines. The edges should be folded here.

Press the fabric scraps. Place the pattern on the straight of the fabric. Cut along the solid lines. There should be seven (7) diamond shapes and one circle for each block. The fabric can be all the same or different. This depends on personal taste.

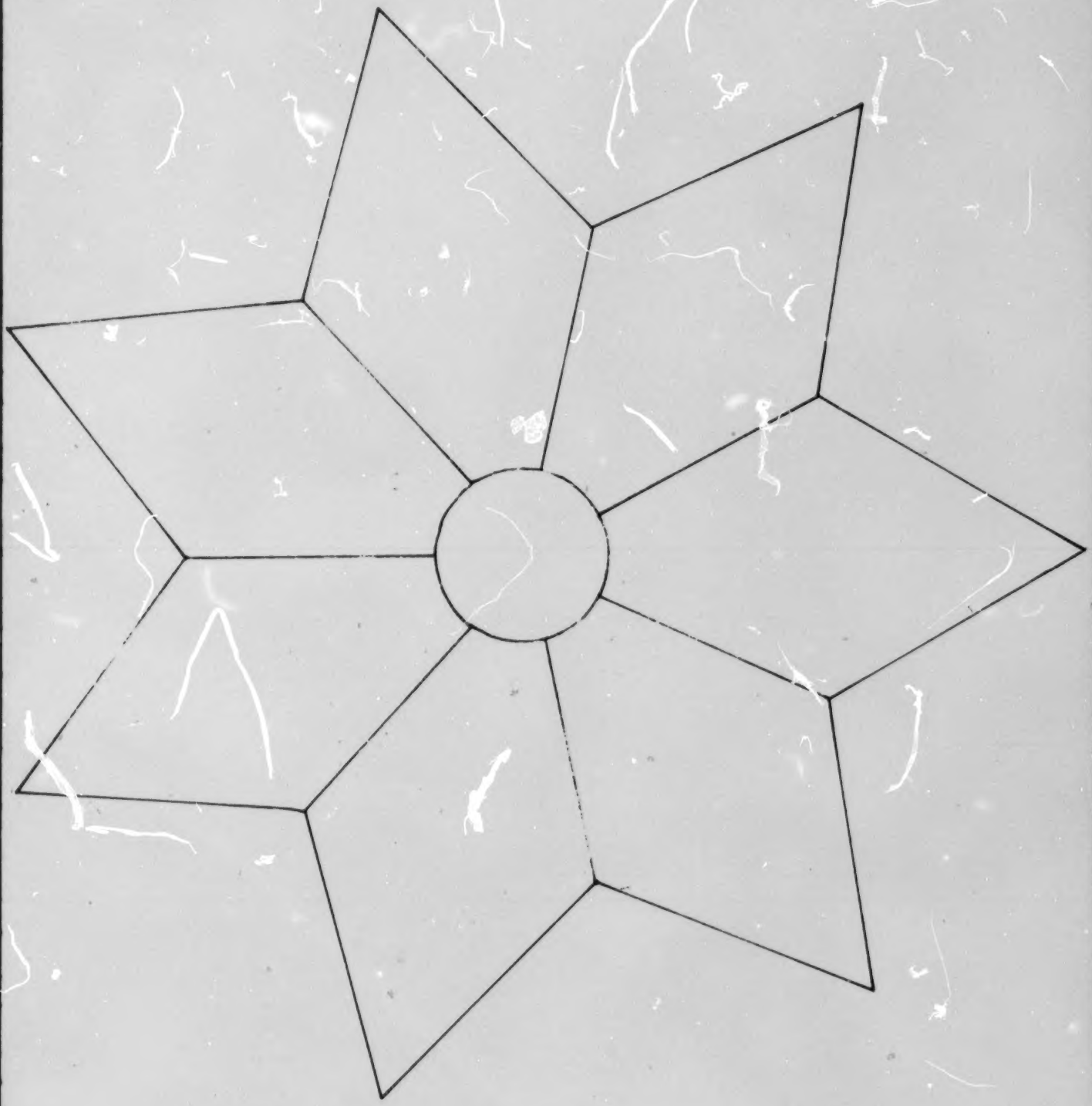
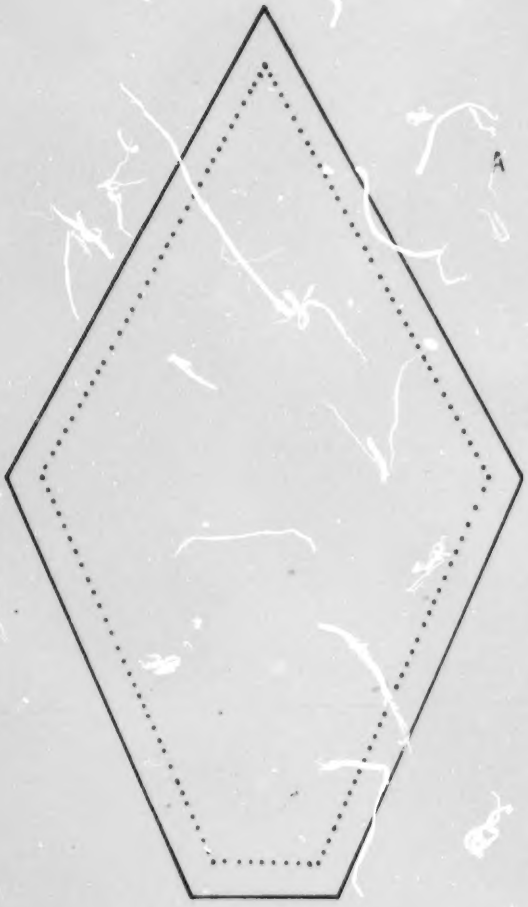


Figure .9



A

B

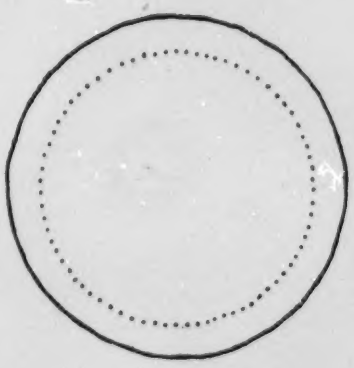


Figure 10

Place two (2) diamond shapes right sides together. (Figure 11) With a small running stitch sew one side of the diamond. (Figure 12) Open this up. Sew another diamond to one of the sides. (Figure 13) Continue until all seven are sewn in a circle. (Figure 14)

Figure

Now fold a 1/4 inch hem around the small circle. Baste this hem. (Figure 15)

Figure

Place the circle in the middle of the star. Sew it with a whip stitch. Go from bottom to top with every stitch. (Figure 16)

Crease the upper edges of the star back 1/4 inch. Baste them. (Figure 17)

Place the 13 inch square flat. Center the star on it. Pin the star. Now, baste it to the top. (Figure 18)

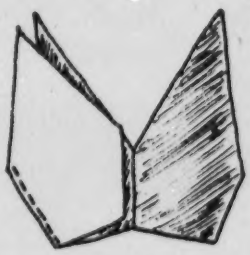


Figure 13

Whip stitch the edges of the star to the square. (Figure 19)

Now place one of the 13 inch by 3½ inch strips at the side of the square. Be sure to have right sides together. Sew them together with a 1/4 inch seam. (Figure 20)

Do the same on the other side. The square should now look like Figure 21. The top square is now pieced. It is ready for the quilting.

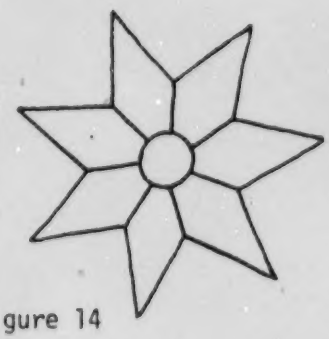


Figure 14

Place the top face down on a table. Smooth the batting on top of it. Place the 18 inch by 13 inch piece on top of this.

Pin then baste the three pieces together.

A large embroidery hoop can be used to hold the square tight, like a frame, if you have one.

Begin by stitching around the outside of the center circle. Use small running stitches. (Figure 22) Next stitch up the lower edges of each star point. (Figure 23) Now go around the outside of each star point. (Figure 24)

Hem the ends of the square.

Now quilt the border. Sew straight lines across each one. (Figure 25) Stitches should be spaced in rows about 1/2 inch apart.

To finish the mat, cut two 18½ inch pieces of bias tape. Put one edge of the tape on top of the mat. Leave 1/4 inch on each end. Be sure it has right sides together. Pin the tape in place. Sew the edge of the tape to the top with a running stitch. (Figure 26) At each end, fold the tape toward the middle. Now fold the tape to the back. Sew it down with a whip stitch.

The block is now finished. To make a quilt with this pattern, you will need 19 more squares.

When making a quilt there are two different ways to do the quilting. One is to make completed squares like the one that is discussed here. Or, the entire top can be

Figure 15

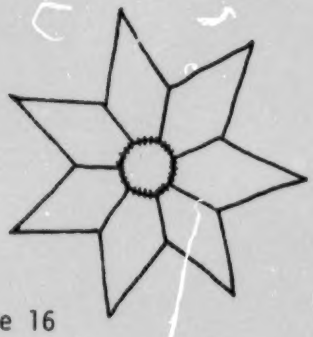


Figure 16

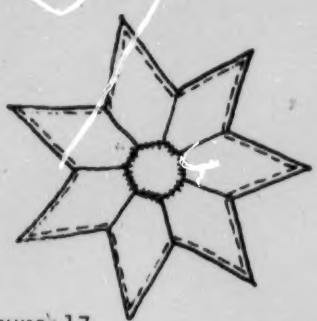


Figure 17

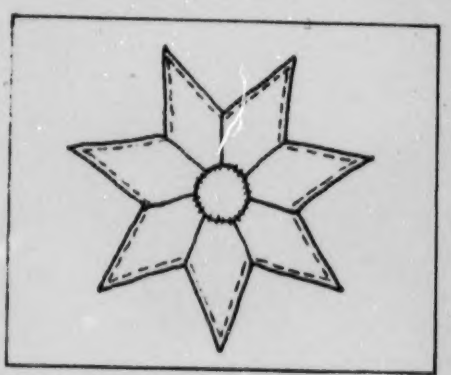


Figure 18

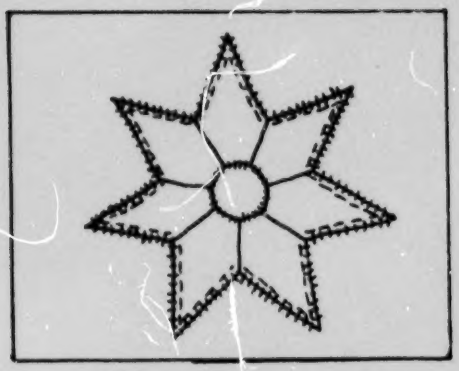


Figure 19

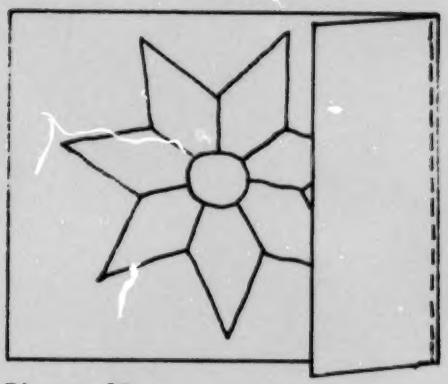


Figure 20

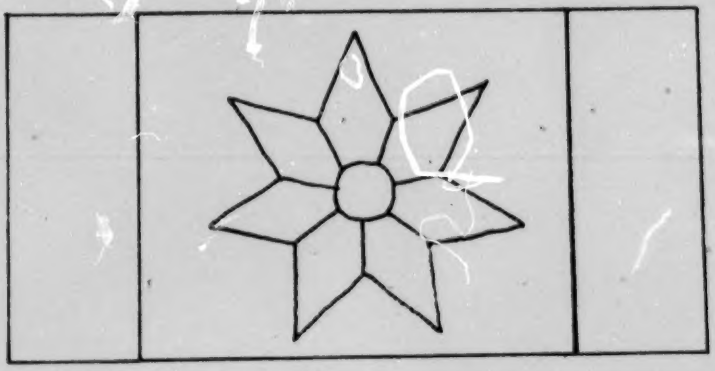


Figure 21

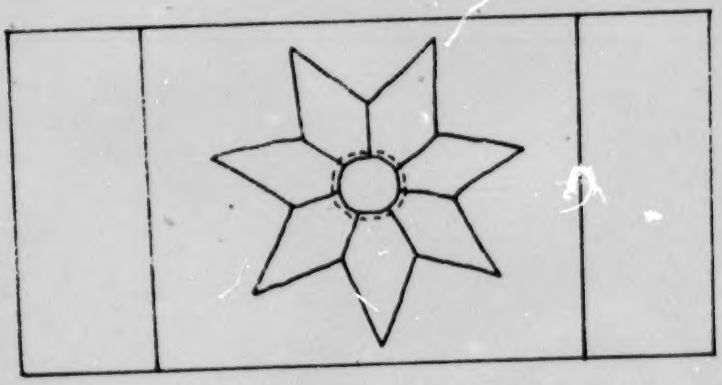


Figure 22

Figure 23

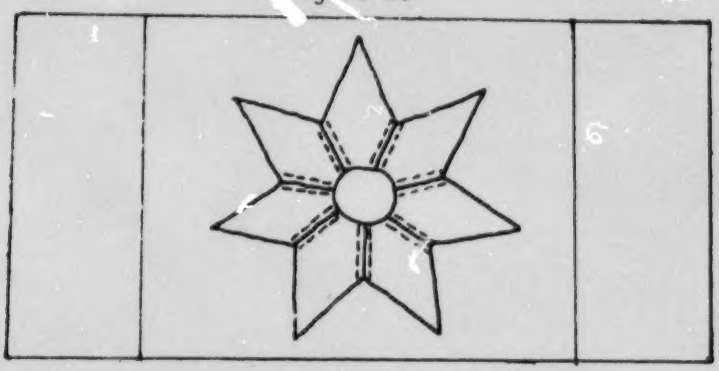


Figure 24

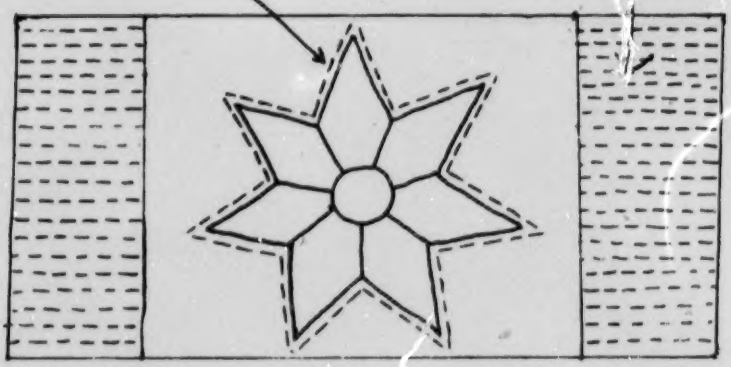
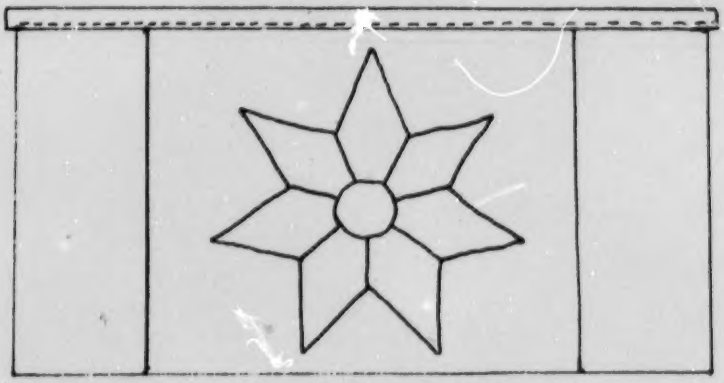


Figure 26



pieced, then put a large roll of batting down with the full size backing. With this method the quilt is quilted all at one time. For this method it is best to use a quilting frame.

Quilting frames can be purchased or made. Most quilting books go into detail on how to make a frame. Linda S. Weeks in her book, Patchwork and Other Quilting (pages 4 and 5), explains this in detail.

Before making quilts with other patterns, it would be good to do more reading about quilts. Look at a lot of patterns before deciding on one.

III. WHAT NEXT?

These are the basic steps to quilting. However, you will probably want to learn more about it. One of the best ways to learn is to work with someone who quilts. Some schools, groups and recreation programs have classes in quilting.

Quilts are in demand. Some of them sell for hundreds of dollars. A quilt with good color and design could be sold.

Other books may help you. Your Adult Education teacher has a list of some books.

Places to get more information on quilting:

The Adult Education teacher.

Local Cooperative Extension Service office.

Library.